

Nunes introduces Highway 99 improvement bill

Moments after he was sworn in to a second term in Congress, Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Tulare, introduced a bill that would make Highway 99 a federal interstate, as well as make it a high-priority corridor eligible for special funds in the National Highway System.

"You don't have to travel very far on Highway 99 to realize it is the most neglected highway in the state," Rep. Nunes said. "It is the most heavily traveled route from Los Angeles to Sacramento and that kind of wear and tear has taken its toll."

The length of highway covered under the legislation extends from south of Bakersfield to Sacramento.

If the bill is passed, the State of California would need to develop a plan for making improvements to the highway prior to Interstate designation. The Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with the state, would retain the authority to waive unnecessary improvements, potentially reducing



Rep. Devin Nunes meets with Rep. Jerry Lewis in his office on Capitol Hill. Rep. Nunes was congratulating him on his selection as Chairman of the Committee on Appropriation. (Jan 2005) (AP Photo/Gerald Herbert)

considerable cost.

To help pay for necessary improvements, Rep. Nunes wants the stretch of roadway entered into a national high-priority corridor program. This would make Highway 99 immediately eligible for new federal funding.

"Highway 99 is vital to the economic prosperity of

the San Joaquin Valley," Rep. Nunes said. "It is our link to important seaports in Los Angeles and Oakland. It is also our commercial link to the rest of the country. Improvements to this highway would help our economy, improve our air quality and ease traffic congestion."

Nunes appointed to Veterans' Affairs Committee

Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Tulare, was appointed to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, becoming the first Republican from the Central Valley to sit on that panel in more than 50 years.

The appointment brings his committee assignments to three, in addition to an assignment on Ways and Means where he is gaining seniority while on leave.

In January, Rep. Nunes was also chosen to be Chairman of the Resources Subcommittee on National

Parks. He also sits on the Committee on Agriculture.

"It is a great honor for me to serve on the Committee on Veterans' Affairs as a representative of the Central Valley. I look forward to being an advocate for our service men and women," Rep. Nunes said.

"I have met many of our local vets and my office handles dozens of cases for veterans every year. This appointment will allow me to work with the committee to improve our service to our

valued veterans," Nunes said.

The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs reviews veterans' programs, examines current laws, and reports bills and amendments to strengthen existing laws concerning veterans and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), such as for health care, disability compensation, GI bill education and job training, home loan guarantees, life insurance policies, and a nationwide system of veterans' cemeteries.